

Trouble At Sea (AV1)

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Summary: The party runs into trouble - or rather, trouble runs into them - as they sail out to the unknown waters of the Far East.

Trouble At Sea (AV1)

**\*\*Characters:\*\*** Rhen D., Lars T., Dameon M., Elini A., Te'ijal R., Galahad T., P. John, M. Marge

**\*\*Idea:\*\*** Just wanted to flesh out their journey a little bit. I wanted to add a little more something to the story which wouldn't affect the main game.

**\*\*Note:\*\*** I was watching The Chronicles of Narnia: Voyage of the Dawn Treader, and the sea serpent scene came on and I was thinking, cool, that makes a great prompt!

\* \* \*

><p>The party was in good spirits as they sailed from the Southern Isle. Pirate John manned the helm, whistling. Fair winds struck them as soon as they were out of the bay and the ship sailed smoothly over the Southern Sea. They spotted land days later and got excited, until the pirate explained that they've just sailed past the Eastern Isle.<p>

For days they sailed East and saw nothing but sea and sky, seeing neither fish nor gull. This caused them to become restless, their leader more than the others, and she decided to get some fresh air and made her way to the main deck.

"Spot anything?" asked Rhen, shielding her eyes against the sun as she directed the question at their captain.

"None yet," Pirate John replied from the wheel.

They sailed for another four days and the party began to feel that things were different.

First it was the humidity; there was too much moisture in the air. The light, on the other hand, there was too little of it. The sun came up looking smaller and smaller with each morning. The clear blue in the sky that accompanied them when they left the Southern Isle had turned dull grey. Ominous-looking storm clouds filled the horizons as far as the eye can see and the deep blue of the water was now black, void of any living being. They were sailing on dangerous waters and the party knew it.

The entire party - except for the sorcerer and the druid - was standing on the main deck, looking out at the strange black water.

"These are strange seas we're sailin' on," said Pirate John, concerned.

"I don't think anyone has sailed this far out in a very long time," Galahad said gravely.

Their leader nodded.

"You're right. A woman in Veldt gave me a map and I've studied it. The waters beyond the Eastern Isle are uncharted; the map is blank in the Far East," Rhen said, "We might just be the first travelers after a very long time."

"That is not comforting to know, Sword Singer," Elini said.

Suddenly Te'ijal hissed, baring her fangs.

"What is it?" Elini asked.

"We are not alone out here, Overlander," the vampire replied.

"Then we best be prepared," the demon-summoner said, uncoiling her whip, "who knows what we might encounter."

"Over there!" Galahad shouted, pointing into the distance. They saw three black rocks (or was it dark green?) breaking through the surface of the water.

"They're... rocks, Paladin," Elini said slowly, puzzled.

The Paladin, offended, made an annoyed sound. "I am certain they weren't there before, lady. And even if they were rocks, I highly doubt there would be any this far out at sea," Galahad replied. He looked up at the pirate and continued, "Pirate John! Am I right?"

The pirate, a slight frown on his face, gave a curt nod, his eye never leaving the "rocks".

For a moment the "rocks" remained static - and Galahad was almost made the fool - when suddenly they disappeared under the surface of the black sea. They watched as it descended and left ripples of water

in its wake.

Elini whipped her head around to face the rest. "Are... are my eyes tricking me?" she asked, astonished.

Te'ijal said nothing but continued to stare out at the water, her eyes narrowing.

"No, they're not tricking you. I saw that too... I think," Rhen said, unsure of herself. Somebody's abrupt shout interrupted her. It was Galahad and he was pointing frantically at the same spot again. "\_There it is again!\_" he yelled.

"Not a mirage then," Rhen said, heart beating fast in her chest.

"And it's getting closer," Elini added.

True enough, the "rocks" reappeared from the water's surface looking exactly the same as before, except being a little closer (and bigger, they noted uncomfortably) to the ship. And as they watched, the "rocks" disappeared - once again - into the dark water. Galahad and Rhen ran to the side of the deck to inspect the waters, quite certain it would resurface again.

"Get away from there!" yelled Pirate John, his eyes wide.

There was something in the pirate's voice that made them freeze in their tracks. He was a pirate after all, and he was most at home at sea. He knew the waters, and by the Goddess, if he told them to move away from the side, \_move away they did\_. And right now as they looked up at him, the pirate was visibly shocked, no, \_terrified\_; his eyes were wide and his legs frozen to the ground.

"They're not rocks!" Pirate John yelled, his voice a few octaves higher than usual, "that's the \_sea serpent!\_"

The party turned to look at each other with wide eyes. Mostly brushed off as a myth, men of land have always wondered and foolishly dreamed of capturing - or at least, catching a glimpse of - the legendary sea serpent. Some sailors have even boasted of sightings and went as far as providing "proof" of encounters with the creature (with "proof" being decapitated chunks of squid or large fish). None have ever been verified. Some even said the creature died and the seas were rid of it forever. But right now as they came face to face with the serpent, they found that it was certainly no myth and was in fact, very, very much alive.

The sea serpent, having resurfaced again, was now bigger and closer than before. They could see it clearly now; the weakening sunlight reflected off its dark green body. Its flattened head was a weird cylindrical shape - a mutilated cross between a horse and a dragon - and appendages (too many to count) that looked to be tentacles lined its head and all the way down its neck until they disappeared into the black water. Mouldy scales covered its hide; seaweed and assorted sea critters stuck and hung from its body as it neared the ship. What they mistook earlier for rocks was actually the serpent's body disappearing and appearing on the water surface; it was now heading - and heading FAST - towards them.

Rhen and Galahad swiftly unsheathed their swords.

"All hands on deck!" Rhen screamed.

Lars, holding a heavy book, rushed out from the captain's quarters. He froze at the sight of the creature and inhaled sharply. "That's \_new\_," he said. He ran back into the quarters and came out again, this time gripping his orb staff, without the book.

He was joined by Dameon, who watched the sea serpent with a slight frown on his face.

"Brace yourselves!" Pirate John yelled. He turned the wheel desperately, trying to steer the ship away. But, as fate would have it, the winds died and the ship was horribly stuck in place with the approaching sea creature gaining fast on them. Abandoning his post, the pirate joined them on deck, rapier in hand.

"Te'ijal! Can you hit it?" Rhen asked.

Te'ijal raised her bow with her arrow in place and pulled back gracefully. She narrowed her eyes at her target and released the bow string. They watched, disappointed, as the speeding arrow bounced off the creature's scales, doing next to no damage. The vampire hissed in anger and cursed beneath her breath. She raised her bow again.

As if angered, the sea serpent increased its speed, now being just a mere distance away.

"Come on!" Mad Marge growled, gripping her sharpened sword, "come on, ya ugly worm!"

Rhen braced herself and lifted her sword in the air, the song to call forth the force of the mountains ready on her lips. To her right she saw Lars lifting his staff, also ready to strike. Elini cracked her whip, her irises turning and glowing white as she prepared to summon forth a demon creature to aid in their battle. Galahad and Pirate John were off to the left, jaws set and faces grim.

The sea serpent was now upon them, its neck stretching longer and longer, until it was almost as tall as the main mast. It looked down at the party with murky red eyes, ready to smash the ship into pieces.

Reciting a quick spell, Lars pointed his staff in the air and the orb, fastened on the tip of the staff, glowed a striking blue. A single bolt of lightning formed from the storm clouds above them and hit the creature squarely on the head. It gave out a chilling, ear-piercing shriek and thrashed its head about wildly. Recovering and bellowing in rage, it swooped down to attack.

"\_Look out!\_" Galahad shouted. He grabbed Pirate John by the collar and threw himself to the side, bringing the pirate with him. They moved away just a second before the sea serpent's head crashed through the deck, on the very spot they were standing on a moment ago. The floor cracked open with a loud explosion and the ship shook violently. Pieces of wood went flying in all directions. Losing her balance, Rhen fell to the ground.

The creature - dissatisfied - retracted and a wet, bubbly hiss

escaped its mouth.

Te'ijal nimbly stepped back and ran up to the sterncastle deck, away from the threat. She raised her bow again, this time aiming for the creature's eye. But it moved away the second she released her string, and the arrow uselessly bounced off its scales once again. "Curses!" she cried.

Shrieking, the sea serpent made another attempt at the party. They braced themselves for the hit but it never came. Looking up, they saw a humming, translucent shield around the ship, glowing a myriad of various faint colours. The humming grew louder with each hit and the shield glowed white where the creature hit it as the sea serpent tried, again and again, to penetrate it by smashing its head against the magical shield.

Rhen looked to her left and saw Dameon holding his staff and his free hand in the air, lips moving fast to a spell. With every strike of the sea serpent the Druid grimaced and was forced a step backwards, sweat appearing on his brow from the exertion.

Taking this opportunity, the sword singer swung her sword in the air and sang. Her blade sang with her as energy gathered from the surrounding atmosphere. It swirled around the blade and merged with the sword, turning its blade red. She ran to the edge of the ship - as close to the sea serpent as she possibly could - and thrust her sword forward.

The sharp blade pierced the creature's flesh, just barely, but it worked.

"... \_calling forth the Mountain's Yawn!\_" Rhen cried, ending her song. The red from her blade dissipated and spread rapidly throughout the sea serpent's hide from the wound she created. The creature's scales glowed hot and bright red where the energy spread, burning it beneath its skin. At the same time Lars conjured yet another blinding lightning strike, striking the creature on its neck. Crackling electricity met and merged with red energy and the mixture combusted into a fire. The sea serpent recoiled, roaring in pain.

Relentless, the sea serpent lunged at them with its burning neck, this time breaking the shield. The force sent Dameon and his staff flying backwards on the ground.

Off to the right, Elini cracked her whip. "Distract it, demon," she ordered, her eyes glowing white. The ice elemental she had summoned, known as Indra, floated above the sea serpent and conjured a blue, flaming iceball, sending it flying toward the water. The water surrounding the creature immediately hardened and turned to ice, hindering its movements.

"Now!" the demon-summoner yelled to Pirate John and Galahad, but the sea serpent broke through the ice with a burst of strength, retreating fast into the water.

"It went away!" Pirate John cried.

"Be on your guard, pirate! It is not over yet!" Te'ijal yelled over her bow.

As if on cue, the sea serpent broke through the water, resurfacing on the other side of the ship. It rose high above the vessel with a deafening roar, sending a huge spray of seawater on the party. Drenched, they turned around to see the creature form an arch with its body, between the main mast and the foremast, before diving into the water on the other side, its body forming a loop around the ship.

"\_It means to crush the ship!\_" Galahad shouted.

"Find its weakness! It has to have a weakness!" Rhen cried desperately between gasps, "we have to find it before it breaks the ship!"

Dameon, having regained stability in his legs, raised his hand and sang a Lullaby, trying his best to interfere with the creature's consciousness. But the serpent easily shook him off and the party watched in horror as the serpent reemerged again from behind, arched over the ship and dived back into the water in front of them, creating a double loop.

The loops then began to decrease in size.

Yelling, Mad Marge, Pirate John and Galahad rushed forward and hacked at the creature's body. But swords and rapiers did little to its tough hide and hard scales. The tiny tentacles lining its neck reached out for them. One coiled itself around Galahad's arm and he let out a pained scream.

"Watch out for the tentacles! There are teeth on them!" he yelled. He gave the tentacle a hard punch and it released its grip. Blood dripped down his arm from the tiny puncture wounds.

Reciting soundlessly, Lars raised his staff and conjured up the Plague. Dark purple energy filled his orb and swirled around the glass sphere. The staff shook as the energy escaped the orb in the shape of a twister and rained down upon the sea serpent.

The effect was immediate. The creature's scales started rotting in on themselves, eating away its skin.

Dismissing Indra, Elini summoned the energy of a red dragon, of which she infused into her whip, making it glow orange. She lashed out repeatedly at the serpent's body, her whip leaving burning blisters on its already rotting skin. Galahad and Mad Marge took the opportunity to stab the open wounds, its rotting scales no longer protecting the flesh.

Undeterred, the sea serpent's head emerged once again behind them, intending to create a third loop. By now the sizes of the double loops had decreased horribly, one of which bending, breaking and finally snapping off the top of the main mast.

Rhen looked up to see falling debris. "Look out!" she called, pushing Lars - who was the nearest to her - to the side, holding up her shield in the process. The others also jumped for cover to avoid getting hit.

"Thanks," Lars said breathlessly, getting up but falling again as the sea serpent gave the vessel the first squeeze, resulting in a loud

crunch. The ship rocked and swayed dangerously, sending more sprays of seawater onto them. It was getting harder to maintain their balance and to fight the serpent off at the same time.

"Are you alright?" Rhen shouted over the noise, noting the lack of colour in the sorcerer's face.

"Don't think I can hold out much longer," he replied with a grim smile. Conjuring the Plague had been extremely draining on Lars, and it was visible in his pale face and shaking hands.

"Me too. Hang in there," she said to him. Then she looked at the serpent.

"Every creature has its weakness," Rhen said, more to herself. She brushed her wet hair away from her face, eyeing the sea serpent critically.

And then she saw it.

There was a soft, gill-like spot beneath the sea serpent's throat, which it used to breathe in air. But it was too high up for any sword to reach and definitely too dangerous for magic to be casted on, as the swaying ship could easily make the wielder miss its target. There was only one person who could hit it.

"Te'ijal!" Rhen shouted.

Te'ijal turned at the sound of her name. "What is it, sword singer?" she called out.

"The throat! Hit its throat!"

"The creature is thrashing about too much! I cannot get a clear shot!"

Shaking her head, Rhen raised her sword in the air again. "We'll distract it! Watch out for my command!" She then sang and her blade turned red again with the force of the mountains.

Joining her, Lars got up, and using what's left of his strength, conjured up another lightning strike. They struck the sea serpent together, setting its flesh on fire. Attracted to the acidic blisters formed from Elini's whips, the flames spread eagerly across - and beneath - the creature's skin.

The sea serpent roared and tried to shake itself away. However it was heavily weakened by the Plague, the flames and burning blisters, and the continuous sword-hacking. It arched its neck in pain, exposing its gill.

"Now, Te'ijal!" Rhen shouted.

Te'ijal nocked an arrow, swiftly raising her bow and pointing it the serpent's throat, her red lips pursing in concentration as she aimed for its gill.

The sea serpent seemed to sense this and turned its head on the vampire. It lunged for her but was stopped by yet another humming shield surrounding her, conjured by the druid.

Smiling smugly, Te'ijal murmured, "Bye, creature," and released the string. The arrow flew past her face and whizzed through the air.

It did not miss its target.

The arrow pierced the soft gill and the sea serpent let out a monstrous howl. It thrashed about wildly, splashing seawater and breaking the foremast. That caused the ship to rock violently, knocking everyone to the ground.

"Hold on tight!" Pirate John yelled.

Rhen grabbed on to the side of the ship as the creature continued to struggle, roaring as it did so. She watched as Te'ijal calmly raised her bow again; she aimed at the creature's throat and released. Once again the arrow hit its target with sharp precision.

The second shot proved fatal as the sea serpent ceased struggling and fell, dead, onto the ship deck with a loud crash. Slowly the body uncoiled and slid off the ship, dragging half of the foremast deck and what remained of the splintered main mast with it. It landed into the black water with a huge splash which sent another burst of seawater onto the party again.

Blinking the water from her eyes, Rhen got up and ran to the side of the ship, leaning over. She was joined by Pirate John and Galahad. They watched as the sea serpent's bloody corpse sank slowly amongst ship debris into the deep water until it was nothing but a blur and out of sight.

"It's... it's dead!" she cried out victoriously.

At that, Lars collapsed, passing out.

Knowing that Te'ijal was no longer in any danger, Dameon ceased his conjuring of the shield and he too, collapsed, eyes rolling up their sockets as his body hit the ground.

Elini's eyes stopped glowing and the acidic, orange glow disappeared from her whip. She staggered to the stump of the main mast and sat herself down, leaning against it and breathing heavily.

Mad Marge sat near the door to the captain's quarters, a gash on her forehead causing one side of her face and the front of her garment to be drenched in red.

"Lars! Dameon!" Rhen cried, running to them. She pressed her ear to the sorcerer's chest, relief flooding her body as she heard the steady beating of his heart. She then did the same for Dameon. The Druid was also alive. Sighing and wiping away the sudden, unwanted tears from her face, Rhen lay down between the two men, the adrenaline finally leaving her body; she closed her eyes in exhaustion.

Te'ijal jumped off the sterncastle deck and landed on her feet. She headed for Galahad. "Are you hurt, crumpet?"

"I am fine," the paladin replied gruffly.



Pirate John ran to the demon-summoner, tossing his dented rapier to the side. She interrupted the pirate before he could open his mouth. "I am drained but I am fine. Worry not, pirate," Elini said. She then turned to Mad Marge. "Barmaid, what about you?"

"Nothin' ya should care about," Mad Marge grunted. Elini's lips spread into a wry smile and she closed her eyes, leaning her head against the stump.

As they spoke, the ship stopped rocking and slowly stabilised. The winds picked up but the broken sails flapped uselessly. In the distance a hawk cried out.

"A sea serpent," Galahad said in disbelief, water dripping down his face.

"\_The\_ legendary sea serpent," Pirate John chimed in, a smile on his face despite having a close brush with death.

"We were lucky. Those were my last two arrows," Te'ijal said, "and our vessel is ruined." She shook her bow, sending droplets of water flying.

"We have a lot of work to do," Galahad agreed.

"Not now," Elini said, annoyed, "we are spent. Look at the children; they are so pathetically pale they could pass off as vampires. And the druid. He exerted himself with that shield."

All eyes turned to look at the perspiring, pale sun priest.

"But what do we do next? Do we continue East or set course for the Southern Isle? Sword singer," Pirate John said, directing the questions at Rhen. "Sword singer?"

"My lady," Galahad joined in.

Rhen gave no response and Elini laughed weakly. "The child has passed out. She did well, don't you think?"

"A good leader. And she is graceful with the sword, I give you that," the pirate agreed.

"The Goddess couldn't have chosen a better person to save the world than her," Galahad added.

Rhen groaned.

"Please, I'm still conscious and I can hear you. All of you make it sound like I killed the serpent all on my own," she said, opening her eyes and propping herself up on an elbow, "I may be the Chosen One but I couldn't have done it without all of you. We are a team. We \_all\_ did well."

Te'ijal grinned.

Groaning again, the sword singer laid back down once more, closing her eyes. "And as for your questions, Pirate John, let us rest for now, I'm exhausted..."

A few days after the interesting encounter with the mythical sea serpent, the party decided that it was wise to set course back to the Southern Isle for replenishing and repairing. The fight with the creature had destroyed most of their supplies and food stock and had rendered their ship almost useless.

The journey back took longer than usual due to the ship's weakened state and the injured members - Lars, Dameon, Mad Marge and Elini - were tended to as best they could with their limited supplies. Rhen, Galahad and Pirate John made do with whatever debris and objects they could find and fixed the ship up as best as they could (Te'ijal's strength and agility proving extremely useful in that situation), fashioning covers and blankets into a temporary sail.

As they approached the Southern Isle, the party then decided that they would not be using the ship to explore the unknown seas of the far East anymore.

In fact, they decided that they'd be better off on a dragon, and - having fully recovered and replenished - left their ship with Veldt's top repairmen and went off into the desert to look for one in good spirits.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Note (continued):<strong> I imagined Mountain Yawn to be as eruptive as a volcano + related to fire, because we find the Sword in the Demon Caves, surrounded by fire :D

End  
file.